

munity of women, but the instinct of self-preservation was a strong one, and nurses must look after number one.

Referring to the letter read earlier from "Stars and Stripes," Mrs. Fenwick said that American men had been inspired to pass these Bills by the conscientious conviction of the nurses themselves that such legislation would benefit the public. Registration would affect the graduate nurse, firstly educationally, secondly industrially, and thirdly professionally. At present on entering a hospital she did not know what kind of training she would get, or what curriculum she would have to pass through. Industrially, when she had gained her certificate and took her skilled services into the open market, she found her skilled work competing on equal terms with unskilled labour at every turn. Then as to the professional position. Nurses were apt to blame other people for their present unsatisfactory condition in this respect. But if they themselves had objected to unjust conditions of labour, of education, and of professional status, they would long ago have swept them away. They must screw up their courage. The worst enemy they had was their own timidity. Lastly, they must watch most carefully the legislation for their profession and be unanimous in demanding self-government, or they would be in a worse position than ever.

REGISTRATION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A STATE-REGISTERED NURSE.

Miss Janet Speed, registered under Act of Parliament in New Zealand, described the working of this Act and the benefits it conferred. By legal registration, she said, the State gave a guarantee that registered nurses were competent to do their duty. This the public had a right to demand, as the sick were for the time being helpless, and it was one of the first duties of the State to protect human life. Such protection was afforded to the sick in the case of the medical attendant and the chemist, and it was most important that the nurse who administered the remedies prescribed and dispensed should also be guaranteed by the State.

State Registration would, in addition to guaranteeing the competence of the nurse, bring about uniformity in nursing education. It was only just to the nurse that she should be afforded this protection. There must, of course, be always degrees of excellence, but the minimum standard enforced would be compatible with efficiency.

The movement for State Registration in Great Britain called for the co-operation of all true nurses to help to bring it to pass. She had much pleasure in wishing the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses success in its good work, which was in the interests of the sick and for the honour of the nursing profession.

RESOLUTIONS.

The first resolution was proposed by Miss Rogers, Matron of the Leicester Infirmary. It was:—

"That in the opinion of this meeting the Legal Registration of Trained Nurses by Act of Parliament is a matter of urgent national importance, and that it is desirable to introduce a Bill with this object into the House of Commons."

Miss Rogers, in proposing the resolution, said that anything which affected the efficiency of the trained nurse must be of national importance. At present there was great lack of cohesion in the ranks of nurses, and great need for further organisation. The work of Registration should be carried out on Imperial rather than parochial lines. She had heard the other day of a woman working as a private nurse in the town from which she came who had been a patient in the hospital and watched the work of the nurses, and subsequently had undertaken private nursing. The meshes of the Registration net must not be too small, but they must not be large enough to admit women of this description.

Miss Poole, Matron of the East Lancashire Infirmary, Blackburn, who seconded the resolution, hoped that the Central Nursing Council would see that the age for probationers was lower than at present. Nurses' professional superiors in the medical profession could be qualified to direct their work at twenty-one. Why, then, should not a nurse be able to begin to learn her work at that age? We must ask the Government for the legal status, which was our right. We must be willing to give personal service to attain this end. In conclusion, she invited every member of the State Registration Society present to get twenty more during the ensuing year, and pledged herself to do so. In this way the Society would become a powerful influence.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The next resolution was:—

"That the Executive Committee be authorised to instruct Counsel to draft a Bill for discussion providing for the State Registration of Nurses, and that such draft Bill be, after approval by the members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, submitted to hospital committees, medical and nursing bodies, and political societies, and that their consideration of its clauses be invited."

In proposing the resolution, Miss Mollett (Councillor, Matrons' Council) said it was clear that the Bill should be sent for discussion and approval to those bodies who were concerned in the training of nurses. It would rest very largely with nurses, individually to influence these bodies to receive it favourably. She appealed to any who were doubtful if the psychological moment for advancing such a Bill had arrived to give their loyal support to the wishes of the majority, and to use their influence with their committees and with societies with which they were in touch to give it favourable consideration and an honourable reception.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)